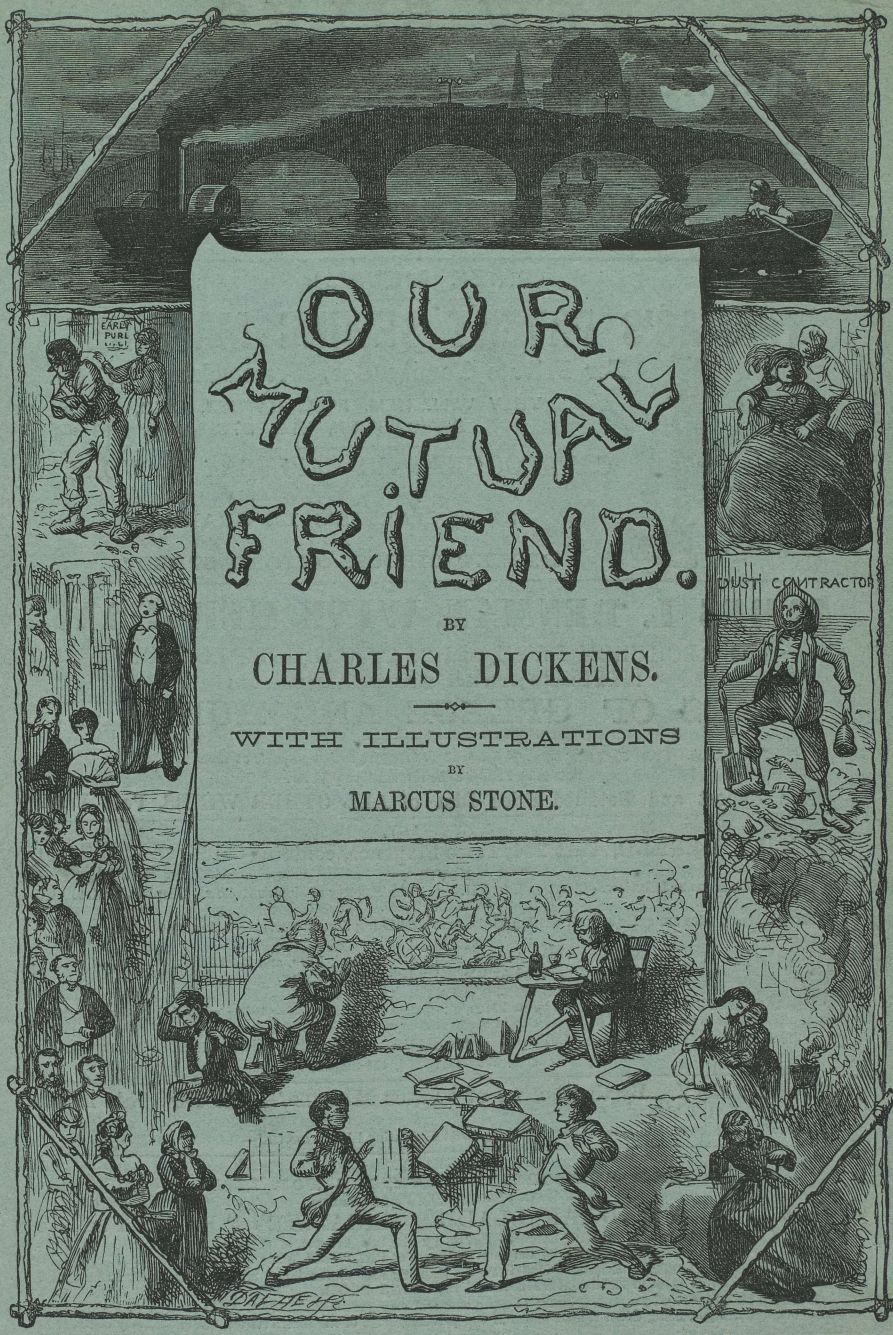
1865

Our Mutual Friend: Part 13

Charles Dickens

No. 13. MAY, 1865. Price 1s.



OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

MARCUS STONE.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, PICCADILLY.

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

North British & Mercantile Insurance Company.

Incorporated by Royal Charter and Special Acts of Parliament.

THE 55th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the NORTH BRITISH AND MERCANTILE INSURANCE COMPANY was held in the Company's Office, 64 Prince's Street, Edinburgh, on Monday, 6th March, 1865, in terms of the Constitution of the Company.

On the motion of the Right Hon. Viscount MELVILLE, K.C.B., JOHN STIRLING, Esq., of KIPPENDAVIE, Senior Extraordinary Director present, was called to the Chair.

A REPORT by the DIRECTORS was read, showing the following results for the year 1864:—

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The PREMIUMS received during the year 1864 amounted to	£248,567 19 7	
Deduct Re-insurances	29,332 8 11	
		£219,235 10 8
During the year 1863 the Premiums, less Re-insurances, were		165,192 8 3
Thus exhibiting a net increase of		£54,043 2 5
The Total Losses by Fire, which during the past year were unusually heavy, amounted to		£183,506 18 6

LIFE DEPARTMENT.

1240 NEW POLICIES were issued, insuring	**£1,034,578 0 0**	
and adding to the Revenue the sum of of Annual Premiums.	**31,895 1 2**	
The DEATHS during the Year were 109 in number, Assuring, with Bonus Additions which was considerably under the expectation by the Company's Tables.	89,119 9 3	
In the ANNUITY DEPARTMENT 31 Bonds had been granted, for which was received the sum of	19,858 14 5	
The RESERVED FUND and SUSPENSE ACCOUNT amounted to	256,762 15 9	
The ACCUMULATED FUND to	2,304,512 7 10	
And the ANNUAL REVENUE to	565,458 16 2	

On the motion of ROBERT BLAIR MACONOCHIE, Esq., seconded by JOHN WHITE CATER, Esq., the Report was unanimously approved of, and a Dividend was declared of 12*s.* 6*d.* per Share, or 10 per cent. on the paid-up Capital Stock of the Company, payable on 20th March current, free of Income-tax.

On the motion of Sir JAMES GARDINER BAIRD, Bart., seconded by JOHN BROWN INNES, Esq.—Sir Walter James, Bart., John Cookson, Esq., of Meldon Park, and the Right Hon. Viscount Melville, K.C.B., were re-elected as Extraordinary Directors; James Campbell Tait, Esq., Laurence Davidson, Esq., and David Baird Wauchope, Esq., as Ordinary Directors of the Edinburgh Board; and Pascoe du Pre Grenfell, Esq., Adolphus Klockmann, Esq., and James du Buisson, Esq., as Ordinary Directors of the London Board.

On the motion of the CHAIRMAN, seconded by Dr. ALEXANDER WOOD, the thanks of the Meeting were, with acclamation, voted to the Directors of the Company.

The special thanks of the Meeting were then, on the motion of GEORGE AULDJO JAMIESON, Esq., seconded by DAVID BAIRD WAUCHOPE, Esq., voted to the Local Boards and Agents.

On the motion of JOHN WHITE CATER, Esq., seconded by DR. BURT, a special vote of thanks was given to JOHN OGILVIE, Esq., the Secretary in Edinburgh, who has been for the long period of fifty years in the service of the Company, and the Meeting recommended the Directors to testify their sense of his attention to the interests of the Company by some substantial mark of their confidence.

On the motion of the Right Hon. Viscount MELVILLE, the thanks of the Meeting were voted to the Chairman.

BONUS YEAR.

On the Close of the Books on 31st DECEMBER next, the SIXTH SEPTENNIAL INVESTIGATION, with the view to a DIVISION of PROFITS in the LIFE BUSINESS, will be made. All Participating Policies opened on or before that date will share.

ESTABLISHMENT—1865.

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The set of Seven Books is made up as follows:—*No.* 1, Letters of single lines. *No.* 2, Letters of double or parallel lines. *No.* 3, Geometrical and ornamental forms. *No.* 4, Objects. *No.* 5, Single leaves. *No.* 6, Leaves, flowers, and sprays. *No.* 7, Animals, insects, reptiles, fishes, and beasts. Learning the different kinds of lines by drawing Italian letters, and so starting from something with which the child is already acquainted, will be found easier and far more interesting than drawing abstract lines.

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BOOK II.—*Letters* in the same order as in Book I., the difficulty of the copies being increased by the letters being in double or parallel lines.

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BOOK V.—*Leaves.*—These copies should lead the child to look at natural leaves, and to understand somewhat their growth and construction. As great a variety of leaves as possible has been given.

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BOOK VII.—*Animals, Insects, Reptiles, Fishes, and Beasts.*—This last book is really the most difficult of the series; and, though from the greater variety and interest of subjects it may not be so tedious as the preceding copies, the utmost care in drawing them must be given.

A child who has already learnt to write, by passing once through this series of books, with great care and patience, will acquire a considerable power of drawing from objects. The same remark equally applies to an adult wishing to acquire the power of drawing. But if at the first essay the student cannot accomplish the exercises of the first, or any other books well, it is desirable that the copies should be repeated until the end is obtained. With this object a series of blank copy books has been prepared; to be used either for second Copies or *Memory* drawings.

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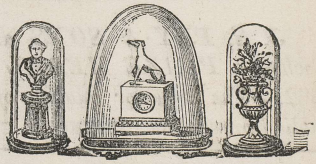

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	Fiddle or Old Silver Pattern.	Bead Pattern.	Thread Pattern.	King's or Thread and Shell Pattern.
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12 Table Forks	1 13 0	2 0 0	2 4 0	2 10 0
12 Table Spoons ...	1 13 0	2 0 0	2 4 0	2 10 0
12 Dessert Forks...	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 12 0	1 15 0
12 Dessert Spoons..	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 12 0	1 15 0
12 Tea Spoons.....	16 0	1 0 0	1 2 0	1 5 0
6 Egg Spoons, gilt bowls..	10 0	12 0	12 0	13 6
2 Sauce Ladles....	6 0	8 0	8 0	9 0
1 Gravy Spoon ...	6 6	9 0	10 0	11 0
2 Salt Spoons, gilt bowls..	3 4	4 0	4 0	4 6
1 Mustard Spoon, gilt bowl...	1 8	2 0	2 0	2 3
1 Pair Sugar Tongs	2 6	3 6	3 6	4 0
1 Pair Fish Carvers	1 4 0	1 10 0	1 10 0	1 10 0
1 Butter Knife....	2 6	4 0	5 6	6 0
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Ivory Handles.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
3½-inch ivory handles	12 0	9 6	4 6
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Bone and Horn Handles.			
Knives and Forks per dozen.			
White bone handles.....	11 0	8 6	2 0
Ditto, balance handles	21 0	17 0	4 6
Black horn, rim'd shoulders.	17 0	14 0	4 0
Do., very strong rivetted hdls.	12 0	9 0	3 0

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11 6	4 6
14 0	5 0
17 0	7 6
26 0	11 0
33 0	12 0
43 0	17 6
19 0	17 6
54 0	21 0
8 6	2 0
17 0	4 6
14 0	4 0
9 0	3 0

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THE FLIGHT.

THE FLIGHT.

"THRESPENN'ORTH RUM."

"THREEPENN'ORTH RUM."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE END OF A LONG JOURNEY.

THE train of carts and horses came and went all day from dawn to nightfall, making little or no daily impression on the heap of ashes, though, as the days passed on, the heap was seen to be slowly melting. My lords and gentlemen and honorable boards, when you in the course of your dust-shovelling and cinder-raking have piled up a mountain of pretentious failure, you must off with your honorable coats for the removal of it, and fall to the work with the power of all the queen's horses and all the queen's men, or it will come rushing down and bury us alive.

Yes, verily, my lords and gentlemen and honorable boards, adapting your Catechism to the occasion, and by God's help so you must. For when we have got things to the pass that with an enormous treasure at disposal to relieve the poor, the best of the poor detest our mercies, hide their heads from us, and shame us by starving to death in the midst of us, it is a pass impossible of prosperity, impossible of continuance. It may not be so written in the Gospel according to Podsnappery; you may not "find these words" for the text of a sermon, in the Returns of the Board of Trade; but they have been the truth since the foundations of the universe were laid, and they will be the truth until the foundations of the universe are shaken by the Builder. This boastful handiwork of ours, which fails in its terrors for the professional pauper, the sturdy breaker of windows and the rampant tearer of clothes, strikes with a cruel and a wicked stab at the stricken sufferer, and is a horror to the deserving and unfortunate. We must mend it, lords and gentlemen and honorable boards, or in its own evil hour it will mar every one of us.

Old Betty Higden fared upon her pilgrimage as many ruggedly honest creatures, women and men, fare on their toiling way along the roads of life. Patiently to earn a spare bare living, and quietly to die, untouched by workhouse hands—this was her highest sublunary hope.

Nothing had been heard of her at Mr. Boffin's house since she trudged off. The weather had been hard and the roads had been bad, and her spirit was up. A less stanch spirit might have been subdued by such adverse influences; but the loan for her little outfit was in no part repaid, and it had gone worse with her than she had foreseen, and she was put upon proving her case and maintaining her independence.

Faithful soul! When she had spoken to the Secretary of that "deadness that steals over me at times," her fortitude had made too little of it. Oftener and ever oftener, it came stealing over her; darker and ever darker, like the shadow of advancing Death. That the shadow should be deep as it came on, like the shadow of an actual presence, was in accordance with the laws of the physical

world, for all the Light that shone on Betty Higden lay beyond Death.

The poor old creature had taken the upward course of the river Thames as her general track; it was the track in which her last home lay, and of which she had last had local love and knowledge. She had hovered for a little while in the near neighbourhood of her abandoned dwelling, and had sold, and knitted and sold, and gone on. In the pleasant towns of Chertsey, Walton, Kingston, and Staines, her figure came to be quite well known for some short weeks, and then again passed on.

She would take her stand in market-places, where there were such things, on market days; at other times, in the busiest (that was seldom very busy) portion of the little quiet High Street; at still other times she would explore the outlying roads for great houses, and would ask leave at the Lodge to pass in with her basket, and would not often get it. But ladies in carriages would frequently make purchases from her trifling stock, and were usually pleased with her bright eyes and her hopeful speech. In these and her clean dress originated a fable that she was well to do in the world: one might say, for her station, rich. As making a comfortable provision for its subject which costs nobody anything, this class of fable has long been popular.

In those pleasant little towns on Thames, you may hear the fall of the water over the weirs, or even, in still weather, the rustle of the rushes; and from the bridge you may see the young river, dimpled like a young child, playfully gliding away among the trees, unpolluted by the defilements that lie in wait for it on its course, and as yet out of hearing of the deep summons of the sea. It were too much to pretend that Betty Higden made out such thoughts; no; but she heard the tender river whispering to many like herself, "Come to me, come to me! When the cruel shame and terror you have so long fled from, most beset you, come to me! I am the Relieving Officer appointed by eternal ordinance to do my work; I am not held in estimation according as I shirk it. My breast is softer than the pauper-nurse's; death in my arms is peacefuller than among the pauper-wards. Come to me!"

There was abundant place for gentler fancies too, in her untutored mind. Those gentlefolks and their children inside those fine houses, could they think, as they looked out at her, what it was to be really hungry, really cold? Did they feel any of the wonder about her, that she felt about them? Bless the dear laughing children! If they could have seen sick Johnny in her arms, would they have cried for pity? If they could have seen dead Johnny on that little bed, would they have understood it? Bless the dear children for his sake, any how! So with the humbler houses in the little street, the inner firelight shining on the panes as the outer twilight darkened. When the families gathered in-doors there, for the night, it was only a foolish fancy to feel as if it were a little hard in them to close the shutter and blacken the flame. So with the lighted shops, and speculations whether their masters and mistresses taking tea in a perspective of back-parlour—not so far within but that the flavour of

tea and toast came out, mingled with the glow of light, into the street—ate or drank or wore what they sold, with the greater relish because they dealt in it. So with the churchyard on a branch of the solitary way to the night's sleeping-place. "Ah me! The dead and I seem to have it pretty much to ourselves in the dark and in this weather! But so much the better for all who are warmly housed at home." The poor soul envied no one in bitterness, and grudged no one anything.

But, the old abhorrence grew stronger on her as she grew weaker, and it found more sustaining food than she did in her wanderings. Now, she would light upon the shameful spectacle of some desolate creature—or some wretched ragged groups of either sex, or of both sexes, with children among them, huddled together like the smaller vermin for a little warmth—lingering and lingering on a doorstep, while the appointed evader of the public trust did his dirty office of trying to weary them out and so get rid of them. Now, she would light upon some poor decent person, like herself, going afoot on a pilgrimage of many weary miles to see some worn-out relative or friend who had been charitably clutched off to a great blank barren Union House, as far from old home as the County Jail (the remoteness of which is always its worst punishment for small rural offenders), and in its dietary, and in its lodging, and in its tending of the sick, a much more penal establishment. Sometimes she would hear a newspaper read out, and would learn how the Registrar General cast up the units that had within the last week died of want and of exposure to the weather: for which that Recording Angel seemed to have a regular fixed place in his sum, as if they were its halfpence. All such things she would hear discussed, as we, my lords and gentlemen and honorable boards, in our unapproachable magnificence never hear them, and from all such things she would fly with the wings of raging Despair.

This is not to be received as a figure of speech. Old Betty Higden however tired, however footsore, would start up and be driven away by her awakened horror of falling into the hands of Charity. It is a remarkable Christian improvement, to have made a pursuing Fury of the Good Samaritan; but it was so in this case, and it is a type of many, many, many.

Two incidents united to intensify the old unreasoning abhorrence —granted in a previous place to be unreasoning, because the people always are unreasoning, and invariably make a point of producing all their smoke without fire.

One day she was sitting in a market-place on a bench outside an inn, with her little wares for sale, when the deadness that she strove against came over her so heavily that the scene departed from before her eyes; when it returned, she found herself on the ground, her head supported by some good-natured market-women, and a little crowd about her.

"Are you better now, mother?" asked one of the women. "Do you think you can do nicely now?"

"Have I been ill then?" asked old Betty.

"You have had a faint like," was the answer, "or a fit. It ain't

that you've been a-struggling, mother, but you've been stiff and numbed."

"Ah!" said Betty, recovering her memory. "It's the numbness. Yes. It comes over me at times."

Was it gone? the women asked her.

"It's gone now," said Betty. "I shall be stronger than I was afore. Many thanks to ye, my dears, and when you come to be as old as I am, may others do as much for you!"

They assisted her to rise, but she could not stand yet, and they supported her when she sat down again upon the bench.

"My head's a bit light, and my feet are a bit heavy," said old Betty, leaning her face drowsily on the breast of the woman who had spoken before. "They'll both come nat'ral in a minute. There's nothing more the matter."

"Ask her," said some farmers standing by, who had come out from their market-dinner, "who belongs to her."

"Are there any folks belonging to you, mother?" said the woman.

"Yes sure," answered Betty. "I heerd the gentleman say it, but I couldn't answer quick enough. There's plenty belonging to me. Don't ye fear for me, my dear."

"But are any of 'em near here?" said the men's voices; the women's voices chiming in when it was said, and prolonging the strain.

"Quite near enough," said Betty, rousing herself. "Don't ye be afeard for me, neighbours."

"But you are not fit to travel. Where are you going?" was the next compassionate chorus she heard.

"I'm a going to London when I've sold out all," said Betty, rising with difficulty. "I've right good friends in London. I want for nothing. I shall come to no harm. Thankye. Don't ye be afeard for me."

A well-meaning bystander, yellow-legginged and purple-faced, said hoarsely over his red comforter, as she rose to her feet, that she "oughtn't to be let to go."

"For the Lord's love don't meddle with me!" cried old Betty, all her fears crowding on her. "I am quite well now, and I must go this minute."

She caught up her basket as she spoke and was making an unsteady rush away from them, when the same bystander checked her with his hand on her sleeve, and urged her to come with him and see the parish-doctor. Strengthening herself by the utmost exercise of her resolution, the poor trembling creature shook him off, almost fiercely, and took to flight. Nor did she feel safe until she had set a mile or two of by-road between herself and the market-place, and had crept into a copse, like a hunted animal, to hide and recover breath. Not until then for the first time did she venture to recall how she had looked over her shoulder before turning out of the town, and had seen the sign of the White Lion hanging across the road, and the fluttering market booths, and the old grey church, and the little crowd gazing after her but not attempting to follow her.

The second frightening incident was this. She had been again as

bad, and had been for some days better, and was travelling along by a part of the road where it touched the river, and in wet seasons was so often overflowed by it that there were tall white posts set up to mark the way. A barge was being towed towards her, and she sat down on the bank to rest and watch it. As the tow-rope was slackened by a turn of the stream and dipped into the water, such a confusion stole into her mind that she thought she saw the forms of her dead children and dead grandchildren peopling the barge, and waving their hands to her in solemn measure; then, as the rope tightened and came up, dropping diamonds, it seemed to vibrate into two parallel ropes and strike her, with a twang, though it was far off. When she looked again, there was no barge, no river, no daylight, and a man whom she had never before seen held a candle close to her face.

"Now, Missis," said he; "where did you come from and where are you going to?"

The poor soul confusedly asked the counter-question where she was?

"I am the Lock," said the man.

"The Lock?"

"I am the Deputy Lock, on job, and this is the Lock-house. (Lock or Deputy Lock, it's all one, while the t'other man's in the hospital.) What's your Parish?"

"Parish!" She was up from the truckle-bed directly, wildly feeling about her for her basket, and gazing at him in affright.

"You'll be asked the question down town," said the man. "They won't let you be more than a Casual there. They'll pass you on to your settlement, Missis, with all speed. You're not in a state to be let come upon strange parishes 'ceptin as a Casual."

"'Twas the deadness again!" murmured Betty Higden, with her hand to her head.

"It was the deadness, there's not a doubt about it," returned the man. "I should have thought the deadness was a mild word for it, if it had been named to me when we brought you in. Have you got any friends, Missis?"

"The best of friends, Master."

"I should recommend your looking 'em up if you consider 'em game to do anything for you," said the Deputy Lock. "Have you got any money?"

"Just a morsel of money, sir."

"Do you want to keep it?"

"Sure I do!"

"Well, you know," said the Deputy Lock, shrugging his shoulders with his hands in his pockets, and shaking his head in a sulkily ominous manner, "the parish authorities down town will have it out of you, if you go on, you may take your Alfred David."

"Then I'll not go on."

"They'll make you pay, as fur as your money will go," pursued the Deputy, "for your relief as a Casual and for your being passed to your Parish."

"Thank ye kindly, Master, for your warning, thank ye for your shelter, and good night."

"Stop a bit," said the Deputy, striking in between her and the door. "Why are you all of a shake, and what's your hurry, Missis?"

"Oh, Master, Master," returned Betty Higden, "I've fought against the Parish and fled from it, all my life, and I want to die free of it!"

"I don't know," said the Deputy, with deliberation, "as I ought to let you go. I'm a honest man as gets my living by the sweat of my brow, and I may fall into trouble by letting you go. I've fell into trouble afore now, by George, and I know what it is, and it's made me careful. You might be took with your deadness again, half a mile off—or half of half a quarter, for the matter of that—and then it would be asked, Why did that there honest Deputy Lock, let her go, instead of putting her safe with the Parish? That's what a man of his character ought to have done, it would be argueyfied," said the Deputy Lock, cunningly harping on the strong string of her terror; "he ought to have handed her over safe to the Parish. That was to be expected of a man of his merits."

As he stood in the doorway, the poor old careworn wayworn woman burst into tears, and clasped her hands, as if in a very agony she prayed to him.

"As I've told you, Master, I've the best of friends. This letter will show how true I spoke, and they will be thankful for me."

The Deputy Lock opened the letter with a grave face, which underwent no change as he eyed its contents. But it might have done, if he could have read them.

"What amount of small change, Missis," he said, with an abstracted air, after a little meditation, "might you call a morsel of money?"

Hurriedly emptying her pocket, old Betty laid down on the table, a shilling, and two sixpenny pieces, and a few pence.

"If I was to let you go instead of handing you over safe to the Parish," said the Deputy, counting the money with his eyes, "might it be your own free wish to leave that there behind you?"

"Take it, Master, take it, and welcome and thankful!"

"I'm a man," said the Deputy, giving her back the letter, and pocketing the coins, one by one, "as earns his living by the sweat of his brow;" here he drew his sleeve across his forehead, as if this particular portion of his humble gains were the result of sheer hard labour and virtuous industry; "and I won't stand in your way. Go where you like."

She was gone out of the Lock-house as soon as he gave her this permission, and her tottering steps were on the road again. But, afraid to go back and afraid to go forward; seeing what she fled from, in the sky-glare of the lights of the little town before her, and leaving a confused horror of it everywhere behind her, as if she had escaped it in every stone of every market-place; she struck of by side ways, among which she got bewildered and lost. That night she took refuge from the Samaritan in his latest accredited form, under a farmer's rick; and if—worth thinking of, perhaps, my fellow-Christians—the Samaritan had in the lonely night, "passed by on the other side," she would have most devoutly thanked High Heaven for her escape from him.

The morning found her afoot again, but fast declining as to the clearness of her thoughts, though not as to the steadiness of her purpose. Comprehending that her strength was quitting her, and that the struggle of her life was almost ended, she could neither reason out the means of getting back to her protectors, nor even form the idea. The overmastering dread, and the proud stubborn resolution it engendered in her to die undegraded, were the two distinct impressions left in her failing mind. Supported only by a sense that she was bent on conquering in her life-long fight, she went on.

The time was come, now, when the wants of this little life were passing away from her. She could not have swallowed food, though a table had been spread for her in the next field. The day was cold and wet, but she scarcely knew it. She crept on, poor soul, like a criminal afraid of being taken, and felt little beyond the terror of falling down while it was yet daylight, and being found alive. She had no fear that she would live through another night.

Sewn in the breast of her gown, the money to pay for her burial was still intact. If she could wear through the day, and then lie down to die under cover of the darkness, she would die independent. If she were captured previously, the money would be taken from her as a pauper who had no right to it, and she would be carried to the accursed workhouse. Gaining her end, the letter would be found in her breast, along with the money, and the gentlefolks would say when it was given back to them, "She prized it, did old Betty Higden; she was true to it; and while she lived, she would never let it be disgraced by falling into the hands of those that she held in horror." Most illogical, inconsequential, and light-headed, this; but travellers in the valley of the shadow of death are apt to be light-headed; and worn-out old people of low estate have a trick of reasoning as indifferently as they live, and doubtless would appreciate our Poor Law more philosophically on an income of ten thousand a year.

So, keeping to byways, and shunning human approach, this troublesome old woman hid herself, and fared on all through the dreary day. Yet so unlike was she to vagrant hiders in general, that sometimes, as the day advanced, there was a bright fire in her eyes, and a quicker beating at her feeble heart, as though she said exultingly, "The Lord will see me through it!"

By what visionary hands she was led along upon that journey of escape from the Samaritan; by what voices, hushed in the grave, she seemed to be addressed; how she fancied the dead child in her arms again, and times innumerable adjusted her shawl to keep it warm; what infinite variety of forms of tower and roof and steeple the trees took; how many furious horsemen rode at her, crying, "There she goes! Stop! Stop, Betty Higden!" and melted away as they came close; be these things left untold. Faring on and hiding, hiding and faring on, the poor harmless creature, as though she were a Murderess and the whole country were up after her, wore out the day, and gained the night.

"Water-meadows, or such like," she had sometimes murmured, on the day's pilgrimage, when she had raised her head and taken any note of the real objects about her. There now arose in the darkness,

a great building, full of lighted windows. Smoke was issuing from a high chimney in the rear of it, and there was the sound of a water-wheel at the side. Between her and the building, lay a piece of water, in which the lighted windows were reflected, and on its nearest margin was a plantation of trees. "I humbly thank the Power and the Glory," said Betty Higden, holding up her withered hands, "that I have come to my journey's end!"

She crept among the trees to the trunk of a tree whence she could see, beyond some intervening trees and branches, the lighted windows, both in their reality and their reflection in the water. She placed her orderly little basket at her side, and sank upon the ground, supporting herself against the tree. It brought to her mind the foot of the Cross, and she committed herself to Him who died upon it. Her strength held out to enable her to arrange the letter in her breast, so as that it could be seen that she had a paper there. It had held out for this, and it departed when this was done.

"I am safe here," was her last benumbed thought. "When I am found dead at the foot of the Cross, it will be by some of my own sort; some of the working people who work among the lights yonder. I cannot see the lighted windows now, but they are there. I am thankful for all!"

* * * * *

The darkness gone, and a face bending down.

"It cannot be the boofer lady?"

"I don't understand what you say. Let me wet your lips again with this brandy. I have been away to fetch it. Did you think that I was long gone?"

It is as the face of a woman, shaded by a quantity of rich dark hair. It is the earnest face of a woman who is young and handsome. But all is over with me on earth, and this must be an Angel.

"Have I been long dead?"

"I don't understand what you say. Let me wet your lips again. I hurried all I could, and brought no one back with me, lest you should die of the shock of strangers."

"Am I not dead?"

"I cannot understand what you say. Your voice is so low and broken that I cannot hear you. Do you hear me?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean Yes?"

"Yes."

"I was coming from my work just now, along the path outside (I was up with the night-hands last night), and I heard a groan, and found you lying here."

"What work, deary?"

"Did you ask what work? At the paper-mill."

"Where is it?"

"Your face is turned up to the sky, and you can't see it. It is close by. You can see my face, here, between you and the sky?"

"Yes."

"Dare I lift you?"

"Not yet."

"Not even lift your head to get it on my arm? I will do it by very gentle degrees. You shall hardly feel it."

"Not yet. Paper. Letter."

"This paper in your breast?"

"Bless ye!"

"Let me wet your lips again. Am I to open it? To read it?"

"Bless ye!"

She reads it with surprise, and looks down with a new expression and an added interest on the motionless face she kneels beside.

"I know these names. I have heard them often."

"Will you send it, my dear?"

"I cannot understand you. Let me wet your lips again, and your forehead. There. O poor thing, poor thing!" These words through her fast-dropping tears. "What was it that you asked me? Wait till I bring my ear quite close."

"Will you send it, my dear?"

"Will I send it to the writers? Is that your wish? Yes, certainly."

"You'll not give it up to any one but them?"

"No."

"As you must grow old in time, and come to your dying hour, my dear, you'll not give it up to any one but them?"

"No. Most solemnly."

"Never to the Parish!" with a convulsed struggle.

"No. Most solemnly."

"Nor let the Parish touch me, nor yet so much as look at me!" with another struggle.

"No. Faithfully."

A look of thankfulness and triumph lights the worn old face. The eyes, which have been darkly fixed upon the sky, turn with meaning in them towards the compassionate face from which the tears are dropping, and a smile is on the aged lips as they ask:

"What is your name, my dear?"

"My name is Lizzie Hexam."

"I must be sore disfigured. Are you afraid to kiss me?"

The answer is, the ready pressure of her lips upon the cold but smiling mouth.

"Bless ye! *Now* lift me, my love."

Lizzie Hexam very softly raised the weather-stained grey head, and lifted her as high as Heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

SOMEBODY BECOMES THE SUBJECT OF A PREDICTION.

"'WE GIVE THEE HEARTY THANKS FOR THAT IT HATH PLEASED THEE TO DELIVER THIS OUR SISTER OUT OF THE MISERIES OF THIS SINFUL WORLD.'" So read the Reverend Frank Milvey in a not untroubled voice, for his heart misgave him that all was not quite right between us and our sister—or say our sister in Law—Poor Law—and that we some-

times read these words in an awful manner, over our Sister and our Brother too.

And Sloppy—on whom the brave deceased had never turned her back until she ran away from him, knowing that otherwise he would not be separated from her—Sloppy could not in his conscience as yet find the hearty thanks required of it. Selfish in Sloppy, and yet excusable, it may be humbly hoped, because our sister had been more than his mother.

The words were read above the ashes of Betty Higden, in a corner of a churchyard near the river; in a churchyard so obscure that there was nothing in it but grass-mounds, not so much as one single tombstone. It might not be to do an unreasonably great deal for the diggers and hewers, in a registering age, if we ticketed their graves at the common charge; so that a new generation might know which was which: so that the soldier, sailor, emigrant, coming home, should be able to identify the resting-place of father, mother, playmate, or betrothed. For, we turn up our eyes and say that we are all alike in death, and we might turn them down and work the saying out in this world, so far. It would be sentimental, perhaps? But how say ye, my lords and gentlemen and honorable boards, shall we not find good standing-room left for a little sentiment, if we look into our crowds?

Near unto the Reverend Frank Milvey as he read, stood his little wife, John Rokesmith the Secretary, and Bella Wilfer. These, over and above Sloppy, were the mourners at the lowly grave. Not a penny had been added to the money sewn in her dress: what her honest spirit had so long projected, was fulfilled.

"I've took it in my head," said Sloppy, laying it, inconsolable, against the church door, when all was done: "I've took it in my wretched head that I might have sometimes turned a little harder for her, and it cuts me deep to think so now."

The Reverend Frank Milvey, comforting Sloppy, expounded to him how the best of us were more or less remiss in our turnings at our respective Mangles—some of us very much so—and how we were all a halting, failing, feeble, and inconstant crew.

"*She* warn't, sir," said Sloppy, taking this ghostly counsel rather ill, in behalf of his late benefactress. "Let us speak for ourselves, sir. She went through with whatever duty she had to do. She went through with me, she went through with the Minders, she went through with herself, she went through with everythink. O Mrs. Higden, Mrs. Higden, you was a woman and a mother and a mangler in a million million!"

With those heartfelt words, Sloppy removed his dejected head from the church door, and took it back to the grave in the corner, and laid it down there, and wept alone. "Not a very poor grave," said the Reverend Frank Milvey, brushing his hand across his eyes, "when it has that homely figure on it. Richer, I think, than it could be made by most of the sculpture in Westminster Abbey!"

They left him undisturbed, and passed out at the wicket-gate. The water-wheel of the paper-mill was audible there, and seemed to have a softening influence on the bright wintry scene. They had

arrived but a little while before, and Lizzie Hexam now told them the little she could add to the letter in which she had enclosed Mr. Rokesmith's letter and had asked for their instructions. This was merely how she had heard the groan, and what had afterwards passed, and how she had obtained leave for the remains to be placed in that sweet, fresh, empty store-room of the mill from which they had just accompanied them to the churchyard, and how the last requests had been religiously observed.

"I could not have done it all, or nearly all, of myself," said Lizzie. "I should not have wanted the will; but I should not have had the power, without our managing partner."

"Surely not the Jew who received us?" said Mrs. Milvey.

("My dear," observed her husband in parenthesis, "why not?")

"The gentleman certainly is a Jew," said Lizzie, "and the lady, his wife, is a Jewess, and I was first brought to their notice by a Jew. But I think there cannot be kinder people in the world."

"But suppose they try to convert you!" suggested Mrs. Milvey, bristling in her good little way, as a clergyman's wife.

"To do what, ma'am?" asked Lizzie, with a modest smile.

"To make you change your religion," said Mrs. Milvey.

Lizzie shook her head, still smiling. "They have never asked me what my religion is. They asked me what my story was, and I told them. They asked me to be industrious and faithful, and I promised to be so. They most willingly and cheerfully do their duty to all of us who are employed here, and we try to do ours to them. Indeed they do much more than their duty to us, for they are wonderfully mindful of us in many ways."

"It is easy to see you're a favourite, my dear," said little Mrs. Milvey, not quite pleased.

"It would be very ungrateful in me to say I am not," returned Lizzie, "for I have been already raised to a place of confidence here. But that makes no difference in their following their own religion and leaving all of us to ours. They never talk of theirs to us, and they never talk of ours to us. If I was the last in the mill, it would be just the same. They never asked me what religion that poor thing had followed."

"My dear," said Mrs. Milvey, aside to the Reverend Frank, "I wish you would talk to her."

"My dear," said the Reverend Frank aside to his good little wife, "I think I will leave it to somebody else. The circumstances are hardly favourable. There are plenty of talkers going about, my love, and she will soon find one."

While this discourse was interchanging, both Bella and the Secretary observed Lizzie Hexam with great attention. Brought face to face for the first time with the daughter of his supposed murderer, it was natural that John Harmon should have his own secret reasons for a careful scrutiny of her countenance and manner. Bella knew that Lizzie's father had been falsely accused of the crime which had had so great an influence on her own life and fortunes; and her interest, though it had no secret springs, like that of the Secretary, was equally natural. Both had expected to see something very different from the

real Lizzie Hexam, and thus it fell out that she became the unconscious means of bringing them together.

For, when they had walked on with her to the little house in the clean village by the paper-mill, where Lizzie had a lodging with an elderly couple employed in the establishment, and when Mrs. Milvey and Bella had been up to see her room and had come down, the mill bell rang. This called Lizzie away for the time, and left the Secretary and Bella standing rather awkwardly in the small street; Mrs. Milvey being engaged in pursuing the village children, and her investigations whether they were in danger of becoming children of Israel; and the Reverend Frank being engaged —to say the truth—in evading that branch of his spiritual functions, and getting out of sight surreptitiously.

Bella at length said:

"Hadn't we better talk about the commission we have undertaken, Mr. Rokesmith?"

"By all means," said the Secretary.

"I suppose," faltered Bella, "that we *are* both commissioned, or we shouldn't both be here?"

"I suppose so," was the Secretary's answer.

"When I proposed to come with Mr. and Mrs. Milvey," said Bella, "Mrs. Boffin urged me to do so, in order that I might give her my small report—it's not worth anything, Mr Rokesmith, except for it's being a woman's—which indeed with you may be a fresh reason for it's being worth nothing—of Lizzie Hexam."

"Mr. Boffin," said the Secretary, "directed me to come for the same purpose."

As they spoke they were leaving the little street and emerging on the wooded landscape by the river.

"You think well of her, Mr. Rokesmith?" pursued Bella, conscious of making all the advances.

"I think highly of her."

"I am so glad of that! Something quite refined in her beauty, is there not?"

"Her appearance is very striking."

"There is a shade of sadness upon her that is quite touching. At least I—I am not setting up my own poor opinion, you know, Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella, excusing and explaining herself in a pretty shy way; "I am consulting you."

"I noticed that sadness. I hope it may not," said the Secretary in a lower voice, "be the result of the false accusation which has been retracted."

When they had passed on a little further without speaking, Bella, after stealing a glance or two at the Secretary, suddenly said:

"Oh, Mr. Rokesmith, don't be hard with me, don't be stern with me; be magnanimous! I want to talk with you on equal terms."

The Secretary as suddenly brightened, and returned: "Upon my honour I had no thought but for you. I forced myself to be constrained, lest you might misinterpret my being more natural. There. It's gone."

"Thank you," said Bella, holding out her little hand. "Forgive me."

"No!" cried the Secretary, eagerly. "Forgive *me!*" For there were tears in her eyes, and they were prettier in his sight (though they smote him on the heart rather reproachfully too) than any other glitter in the world.

When they had walked a little further:

"You were going to speak to me," said the Secretary, with the shadow so long on him quite thrown off and cast away, "about Lizzie Hexam. So was I going to speak to you, if I could have begun."

"Now that you *can* begin, sir," returned Bella, with a look as if she italicized the word by putting one of her dimples under it, "what were you going to say?"

"You remember, of course, that in her short letter to Mrs. Boffin—short, but containing everything to the purpose—she stipulated that either her name, or else her place of residence, must be kept strictly a secret among us."

Bella nodded Yes.

"It is my duty to find out why she made that stipulation. I have it in charge from Mr. Boffin to discover, and I am very desirous for myself to discover, whether that retracted accusation still leaves any stain upon her. I mean whether it places her at any disadvantage towards any one, even towards herself."

"Yes," said Bella, nodding thoughtfully; "I understand. That seems wise, and considerate."

"You may not have noticed, Miss Wilfer, that she has the same kind of interest in you, that you have in her. Just as you are attracted by her beaut— by her appearance and manner, she is attracted by yours."

"I certainly have *not* noticed it," returned Bella, again italicizing with the dimple, "and I should have given her credit for——"

The Secretary with a smile held up his hand, so plainly interposing "not for better taste," that Bella's colour deepened over the little piece of coquetry she was checked in.

"And so," resumed the Secretary, "if you would speak with her alone before we go away from here, I feel quite sure that a natural and easy confidence would arise between you. Of course you would not be asked to betray it; and of course you would not, if you were. But if you do not object to put this question to her—to ascertain for us her own feeling in this one matter—you can do so at a far greater advantage than I or any else could. Mr. Boffin is anxious on the subject. And I am," added the Secretary after a moment, "for a special reason, very anxious."

"I shall be happy, Mr. Rokesmith," returned Bella, "to be of the least use; for I feel, after the serious scene of to-day, that I am useless enough in this world."

"Don't say that," urged the Secretary.

"Oh, but I mean that," said Bella, raising her eyebrows.

"No one is useless in this world," retorted the Secretary, "who lightens the burden of it for any one else."

"But I assure you I *don't*, Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella, half crying.

"Not for your father?"

"Dear, loving, self-forgetting, easily-satisfied Pa! Oh, yes! He thinks so."

"It is enough if he only thinks so," said the Secretary. "Excuse the interruption: I don't like to hear you depreciate yourself."

"But *you* once depreciated *me*, sir," thought Bella, pouting, "and I hope you may be satisfied with the consequences you brought upon your head!" However, she said nothing to that purpose; she even said something to a different purpose.

"Mr. Rokesmith, it seems so long since we spoke together naturally, that I am embarrassed in approaching another subject. Mr. Boffin. You know I am very grateful to him; don't you? You know I feel a true respect for him, and am bound to him by the strong ties of his own generosity; now don't you?"

"Unquestionably. And also that you are his favourite companion."

"That makes it," said Bella, "so very difficult to speak of him. But ——. Does he treat you well?"

"You see how he treats me," the Secretary answered, with a patient and yet proud air.

"Yes, and I see it with pain," said Bella, very energetically.

The Secretary gave her such a radiant look, that if he had thanked her a hundred times, he could not have said as much as the look said.

"I see it with pain," repeated Bella, "and it often makes me miserable. Miserable, because I cannot bear to be supposed to approve of it, or have any indirect share in it. Miserable, because I cannot bear to be forced to admit to myself that Fortune is spoiling Mr. Boffin."

"Miss Wilfer," said the Secretary, with a beaming face, "if you could know with what delight I make the discovery that Fortune is not spoiling *you*, you would know that it more than compensates me for any slight at any other hands."

"Oh, don't speak of *me*," said Bella, giving herself an impatient little slap with her glove. "You don't know me as well as——"

"As you know yourself?" suggested the Secretary, finding that she stopped. "*Do* you know yourself?"

"I know quite enough of myself," said Bella, with a charming air of being inclined to give herself up as a bad job, "and I don't improve upon acquaintance. But Mr. Boffin."

"That Mr. Boffin's manner to me, or consideration for me, is not what it used to be," observed the Secretary, "must be admitted. It is too plain to be denied."

"Are you disposed to deny it, Mr. Rokesmith?" asked Bella, with a look of wonder.

"Ought I not to be glad to do so, if I could: though it were only for my own sake?"

"Truly," returned Bella, "it must try you very much, and—you must please promise me that you won't take ill what I am going to add, Mr. Rokesmith?"

"I promise it with all my heart."

"—And it must sometimes, I should think," said Bella, hesitating, "a little lower you in your own estimation?"

Assenting with a movement of his head, though not at all looking as if it did, the Secretary replied:

"I have very strong reasons, Miss Wilfer, for bearing with the drawbacks of my position in the house we both inhabit. Believe that they are not all mercenary, although I have, through a series of strange fatalities, faded out of my place in life. If what you see with such a gracious and good sympathy is calculated to rouse my pride, there are other considerations (and those you do not see) urging me to quiet endurance. The latter are by far the stronger."

"I think I have noticed, Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella, looking at him with curiosity, as not quite making him out, "that you repress yourself, and force yourself, to act a passive part."

"You are right. I repress myself and force myself to act a part. It is not in tameness of spirit that I submit. I have a settled purpose."

"And a good one, I hope," said Bella.

"And a good one, I hope," he answered, looking steadily at her.

"Sometimes I have fancied, sir," said Bella, turning away her eyes, "that your great regard for Mrs. Boffin is a very powerful motive with you."

"You are right again; it is. I would do anything for her, bear anything for her. There are no words to express how I esteem that good, good woman."

"As I do too! May I ask you one thing more, Mr. Rokesmith?"

"Anything more."

"Of course you see that she really suffers, when Mr. Boffin shows how he is changing?"

"I see it, every day, as you see it, and am grieved to give her pain."

"To give her pain?" said Bella, repeating the phrase quickly, with her eyebrows raised.

"I am generally the unfortunate cause of it."

"Perhaps she says to you, as she often says to me, that he is the best of men, in spite of all."

"I often overhear her, in her honest and beautiful devotion to him, saying so to you," returned the Secretary, with the same steady look, "but I cannot assert that she ever says so to me."

Bella met the steady look for a moment with a wistful, musing little look of her own, and then, nodding her pretty head several times, like a dimpled philosopher (of the very best school) who was moralizing on Life, heaved a little sigh, and gave up things in general for a bad job, as she had previously been inclined to give up herself.

But, for all that, they had a very pleasant walk. The trees were bare of leaves, and the river was bare of water-lilies; but the sky was not bare of its beautiful blue, and the water reflected it, and a delicious wind ran with the stream, touching the surface crisply. Perhaps the old mirror was never yet made by human hands, which,

if all the images it has in its time reflected could pass across its surface again, would fail to reveal some scene of horror or distress. But the great serene mirror of the river seemed as if it might have reproduced all it had ever reflected between those placid banks, and brought nothing to the light save what was peaceful, pastoral, and blooming.

So, they walked, speaking of the newly filled-up grave, and of Johnny, and of many things. So, on their return, they met brisk Mrs. Milvey coming to seek them, with the agreeable intelligence that there was no fear for the village children, there being a Christian school in the village, and no worse Judaical interference with it than to plant its garden. So, they got back to the village as Lizzie Hexam was coming from the paper-mill, and Bella detached herself to speak with her in her own home.

"I am afraid it is a poor room for you," said Lizzie, with a smile of welcome, as she offered the post of honor by the fireside.

"Not so poor as you think, my dear," returned Bella, "if you knew all." Indeed, though attained by some wonderful winding narrow stairs, which seemed to have been erected in a pure white chimney, and though very low in the ceiling, and very rugged in the floor, and rather blinking as to the proportions of its lattice window, it was a pleasanter room than that despised chamber once at home, in which Bella had first bemoaned the miseries of taking lodgers.

The day was closing as the two girls looked at one another by the fireside. The dusky room was lighted by the fire. The grate might have been the old brazier, and the glow might have been the old hollow down by the flare.

"It's quite new to me," said Lizzie, "to be visited by a lady so nearly of my own age, and so pretty, as you. It's a pleasure to me to look at you."

"I have nothing left to begin with," returned Bella, blushing, "because I was going to say that it was a pleasure to me to look at you, Lizzie. But we can begin without a beginning, can't we?"

Lizzie took the pretty little hand that was held out in as pretty a little frankness.

"Now, dear," said Bella, drawing her chair a little nearer, and taking Lizzie's arm as if they were going out for a walk, "I am commissioned with something to say, and I dare say I shall say it wrong, but I won't if I can help it. It is in reference to your letter to Mr. and Mrs. Boffin, and this is what it is. Let me see. Oh yes! This is what it is."

With this exordium, Bella set forth that request of Lizzie's touching secresy, and delicately spoke of that false accusation and its retractation, and asked might she beg to be informed whether it had any bearing, near or remote, on such request. "I feel, my dear," said Bella, quite amazing herself by the business-like manner in which she was getting on, "that the subject must be a painful one to you, but I am mixed up in it also; for—I don't know whether you may know it or suspect it—I am the willed-away girl who was to have been married to the unfortunate gentleman, if he had been pleased to approve of me. So I was dragged into the subject without my consent, and you

were dragged into it without your consent, and there is very little to choose between us."

"I had no doubt," said Lizzie, "that you were the Miss Wilfer I have often heard named. Can you tell me who my unknown friend is?"

"Unknown friend, my dear?" said Bella.

"Who caused the charge against poor father to be contradicted, and sent me the written paper."

Bella had never heard of him. Had no notion who he was.

"I should have been glad to thank him," returned Lizzie. "He has done a great deal for me. I must hope that he will let me thank him some day. You asked me has it anything to do——"

"It or the accusation itself," Bella put in.

"Yes. Has either anything to do with my wishing to live quite secret and retired here? No."

As Lizzie Hexam shook her head in giving this reply and as her glance sought the fire, there was a quiet resolution in her folded hands, not lost on Bella's bright eyes.

"Have you lived much alone?" asked Bella.

"Yes. It's nothing new to me. I used to be always alone many hours together, in the day and in the night, when poor father was alive."

"You have a brother, I have been told?"

"I have a brother, but he is not friendly with me. He is a very good boy though, and has raised himself by his industry. I don't complain of him."

As she said it, with her eyes upon the fire-glow, there was an instantaneous escape of distress into her face. Bella seized the moment to touch her hand.

"Lizzie, I wish you would tell me whether you have any friend of your own sex and age."

"I have lived that lonely kind of life, that I have never had one," was the answer.

"Nor I neither," said Bella. "Not that my life has been lonely, for I could have sometimes wished it lonelier, instead of having Ma going on like the Tragic Muse with a face-ache in majestic corners, and Lavvy being spiteful—though of course I am very fond of them both. I wish you could make a friend of me, Lizzie. Do you think you could? I have no more of what they call character, my dear, than a canary-bird, but I know I am trustworthy."

The wayward, playful, affectionate nature, giddy for want of the weight of some sustaining purpose, and capricious because it was always fluttering among little things, was yet a captivating one. To Lizzie it was so new, so pretty, at once so womanly and so childish, that it won her completely. And when Bella said again, "Do you think you could, Lizzie?" with her eyebrows raised, her head inquiringly on one side, and an odd doubt about it in her own bosom, Lizzie showed beyond all question that she thought she could.

"Tell me, my dear," said Bella, "what is the matter, and why you live like this."

Lizzie presently began, by way of prelude, "You must have many

lovers—" when Bella checked her with a little scream of astonishment.

"My dear, I haven't one!"

"Not one?"

"Well! Perhaps one," said Bella. "I am sure I don't know. I *had* one, but what he may think about it at the present time I can't say. Perhaps I have half a one (of course I don't count that Idiot, George Sampson). However, never mind me. I want to hear about you."

"There is a certain man," said Lizzie, "a passionate and angry man, who says he loves me, and who I must believe does love me. He is the friend of my brother. I shrank from him within myself when my brother first brought him to me; but the last time I saw him he terrified me more than I can say." There she stopped.

"Did you come here to escape from him, Lizzie?"

"I came here immediately after he so alarmed me."

"Are you afraid of him here?"

"I am not timid generally, but I am always afraid of him. I am afraid to see a newspaper, or to hear a word spoken of what is done in London, lest he should have done some violence."

"Then you are not afraid of him for yourself, dear?" said Bella, after pondering on the words.

"I should be even that, if I met him about here. I look round for him always, as I pass to and fro at night."

"Are you afraid of anything he may do to himself in London, my dear?"

"No. He might be fierce enough even to do some violence to himself, but I don't think of that."

"Then it would almost seem, dear," said Bella quaintly, "as if there must be somebody else?"

Lizzie put her hands before her face for a moment before replying: "The words are always in my ears, and the blow he struck upon a stone wall as he said them is always before my eyes. I have tried hard to think it not worth remembering, but I cannot make so little of it. His hand was trickling down with blood as he said to me, 'Then I hope that I may never kill him!'"

Rather startled, Bella made and clasped a girdle of her arms round Lizzie's waist, and then asked quietly, in a soft voice, as they both looked at the fire:

"Kill him! Is this man so jealous, then?"

"Of a gentleman," said Lizzie. "—I hardly know how to tell you—of a gentleman far above me and my way of life, who broke father's death to me, and has shown an interest in me since."

"Does he love you?"

Lizzie shook her head.

"Does he admire you?"

Lizzie ceased to shake her head, and pressed her hand upon her living girdle.

"Is it through his influence that you came here?"

"O no! And of all the world I wouldn't have him know that I am here, or get the least clue where to find me."

"Lizzie, dear! Why?" asked Bella, in amazement at this burst. But then quickly added, reading Lizzie's face: "No. Don't say why That was a foolish question of mine. I see, I see."

There was silence between them. Lizzie, with a drooping head, glanced down at the glow in the fire where her first fancies had been nursed, and her first escape made from the grim life out of which she had plucked her brother, foreseeing her reward.

"You know all now," she said, raising her eyes to Bella's. "There is nothing left out. This is my reason for living secret here, with the aid of a good old man who is my true friend. For a short part of my life at home with father, I knew of things—don't ask me what—that I set my face against, and tried to better. I don't think I could have done more, then, without letting my hold on father go; but they sometimes lie heavy on my mind. By doing all for the best, I hope I may wear them out."

"And wear out too," said Bella soothingly, "this weakness, Lizzie, in favour of one who is not worthy of it."

"No. I don't want to wear that out," was the flushed reply, "nor do I want to believe, nor do I believe, that he is not worthy of it. What should I gain by that, and how much should I lose!"

Bella's expressive little eyebrows remonstrated with the fire for some short time before she rejoined:

"Don't think that I press you, Lizzie; but wouldn't you gain in peace, and hope, and even in freedom? Wouldn't it be better not to live a secret life in hiding, and not to be shut out from your natural and wholesome prospects? Forgive my asking you, would that be no gain?"

"Does a woman's heart that—that has that weakness in it which you have spoken of," returned Lizzie, "seek to gain anything?"

The question was so directly at variance with Bella's views in life, as set forth to her father, that she said internally, "There, you little mercenary wretch! Do you hear that? Ain't you ashamed of yourself?" and unclasped the girdle of her arms, expressly to give herself a penitential poke in the side.

"But you said, Lizzie," observed Bella, returning to her subject when she had administered this chastisement, "that you would lose, besides. Would you mind telling me what you would lose, Lizzie?"

"I should lose some of the best recollections, best encouragements, and best objects, that I carry through my daily life. I should lose my belief that if I had been his equal, and he had loved me, I should have tried with all my might to make him better and happier, as he would have made me. I should lose almost all the value that I put upon the little learning I have, which is all owing to him, and which I conquered the difficulties of, that he might not think it thrown away upon me. I should lose a kind of picture of him—or of what he might have been, if I had been a lady, and he had loved me—which is always with me, and which I somehow feel that I could not do a mean or a wrong thing before. I should leave off prizing the remembrance that he has done me nothing but good since I have known him, and that he has made a change within me, like—like the change in the grain of these hands, which were coarse,

and cracked, and hard, and brown when I rowed on the river with father, and are softened and made supple by this new work as you see them now."

They trembled, but with no weakness, as she showed them.

"Understand me, my dear;" thus she went on. "I have never dreamed of the possibility of his being anything to me on this earth but the kind of picture that I know I could not make you understand, if the understanding was not in your own breast already. I have no more dreamed of the possibility of *my* being his wife, than he ever has—and words could not be stronger than that. And yet I love him. I love him so much, and so dearly, that when I sometimes think my life may be but a weary one, I am proud of it and glad of it. I am proud and glad to suffer something for him, even though it is of no service to him, and he will never know of it or care for it."

Bella sat enchained by the deep, unselfish passion of this girl or woman of her own age, courageously revealing itself in the confidence of her sympathetic perception of its truth. And yet she had never experienced anything like it, or thought of the existence of anything like it.

"It was late upon a wretched night," said Lizzie, "when his eyes first looked at me in my old river-side home, very different from this. His eyes may never look at me again. I would rather that they never did; I hope that they never may. But I would not have the light of them taken out of my life, for anything my life can give me. I have told you everything now, my dear. If it comes a little strange to me to have parted with it, I am not sorry. I had no thought of ever parting with a single word of it, a moment before you came in; but you came in, and my mind changed."

Bella kissed her on the cheek, and thanked her warmly for her confidence. "I only wish," said Bella, "I was more deserving of it."

"More deserving of it?" repeated Lizzie, with an incredulous smile.

"I don't mean in respect of keeping it," said Bella, "because any one should tear me to bits before getting at a syllable of it—though there's no merit in that, for I am naturally as obstinate as a Pig. What I mean is, Lizzie, that I am a mere impertinent piece of conceit, and you shame me."

Lizzie put up the pretty brown hair that came tumbling down, owing to the energy with which Bella shook her head; and she remonstrated while thus engaged, "My dear!"

"Oh, it's all very well to call me your dear," said Bella, with a pettish whimper, "and I am glad to be called so, though I have slight enough claim to be. But I AM such a nasty little thing!"

"My dear!" urged Lizzie again.

"Such a shallow, cold, worldly, Limited little brute!" said Bella, bringing out her last adjective with culminating force.

"Do you think," inquired Lizzie with her quiet smile, the hair being now secured, "that I don't know better?"

"*Do* you know better though?" said Bella. "Do you really believe you know better? Oh, I should be so glad if you did know better, but I am so very much afraid that I must know best!"

Lizzie asked her, laughing outright, whether she ever saw her own face or heard her own voice?

"I suppose so," returned Bella; "I look in the glass often enough, and I chatter like a Magpie."

"I have seen your face, and heard your voice, at any rate," said Lizzie, "and they have tempted me to say to you—with a certainty of not going wrong—what I thought I should never say to any one. Does that look ill?"

"No, I hope it doesn't," pouted Bella, stopping herself in something between a humoured laugh and a humoured sob.

"I used once to see pictures in the fire," said Lizzie playfully, "to please my brother. Shall I tell you what I see down there where the fire is glowing?"

They had risen, and were standing on the hearth, the time being come for separating; each had drawn an arm around the other to take leave.

"Shall I tell you," asked Lizzie, "what I see down there?"

"Limited little b?" suggested Bella with her eyebrows raised.

"A heart well worth winning, and well won. A heart that, once won, goes through fire and water for the winner, and never changes, and is never daunted."

"Girl's heart?" asked Bella, with accompanying eyebrows.

Lizzie nodded. "And the figure to which it belongs——"

"Is yours," suggested Bella.

"No. Most clearly and distinctly yours."

So the interview terminated with pleasant words on both sides, and with many reminders on the part of Bella that they were friends, and pledges that she would soon come down into that part of the country again. Therewith Lizzie returned to her occupation, and Bella ran over to the little inn to rejoin her company.

"You look rather serious, Miss Wilfer," was the Secretary's first remark.

"I feel rather serious," returned Miss Wilfer.

She had nothing else to tell him but that Lizzie Hexam's secret had no reference whatever to the cruel charge, or its withdrawal. Oh yes though! said Bella; she might as well mention one other thing; Lizzie was very desirous to thank her unknown friend who had sent her the written retractation. Was she, indeed? observed the Secretary. Ah! Bella asked him, had he any notion who that unknown friend might be? He had no notion whatever.

They were on the borders of Oxfordshire, so far had poor old Betty Higden strayed. They were to return by the train presently, and, the station being near at hand, the Reverend Frank and Mrs. Frank, and Sloppy and Bella and the Secretary, set out to walk to it. Few rustic paths are wide enough for five, and Bella and the Secretary dropped behind.

"Can you believe, Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella, "that I feel as if whole years had passed since I went into Lizzie Hexam's cottage?"

"We have crowded a good deal into the day," he returned, "and you were much affected in the churchyard. You are over-tired."

"No, I am not at all tired. I have not quite expressed what I

mean. I don't mean that I feel as if a great space of time had gone by, but that I feel as if much had happened—to myself, you know."

"For good, I hope?"

"I hope so," said Bella.

"You are cold; I felt you tremble. Pray let me put this wrapper of mine about you. May I fold it over this shoulder without injuring your dress? Now, it will be too heavy and too long. Let me carry this end over my arm, as you have no arm to give me."

Yes she had though. How she got it out, in her muffled state, Heaven knows; but she got it out somehow—there it was—and slipped it through the Secretary's.

"I have had a long and interesting talk with Lizzie, Mr. Rokesmith, and she gave me her full confidence."

"She could not withhold it," said the Secretary.

"I wonder how you come," said Bella, stopping short as she glanced at him, "to say to me just what she said about it!"

"I infer that it must be because I feel just as she felt about it."

"And how was that, do you mean to say, sir?" asked Bella, moving again.

"That if you were inclined to win her confidence—anybody's confidence—you were sure to do it."

The railway, at this point, knowingly shutting a green eye and opening a red one, they had to run for it. As Bella could not run easily so wrapped up, the Secretary had to help her. When she took her opposite place in the carriage corner, the brightness in her face was so charming to behold, that on her exclaiming, "What beautiful stars and what a glorious night!" the Secretary said "Yes," but seemed to prefer to see the night and the stars in the light of her lovely little countenance, to looking out of window.

O boofer lady, fascinating boofer lady! If I were but legally executor of Johnny's will! If I had but the right to pay your legacy and to take your receipt!—Something to this purpose surely mingled with the blast of the train as it cleared the stations, all knowingly shutting up their green eyes and opening their red ones when they prepared to let the boofer lady pass.

CHAPTER X.

SCOUTS OUT.

"And so, Miss Wren," said Mr. Eugene Wrayburn, "I cannot persuade you to dress me a doll?"

"No," replied Miss Wren snappishly; "if you want one, go and buy one at the shop."

"And my charming young goddaughter," said Mr. Wrayburn plaintively, "down in Hertfordshire—"

("Humbugshire you mean, I think," interposed Miss Wren.)

"— is to be put upon the cold footing of the general public, and is to derive no advantage from my private acquaintance with the Court Dressmaker?"

"If it's any advantage to your charming godchild—and oh, a precious godfather she has got!"—replied Miss Wren, pricking at him in the air with her needle, "to be informed that the Court Dressmaker knows your tricks and your manners, you may tell her so by post, with my compliments."

Miss Wren was busy at her work by candle-light, and Mr. Wrayburn, half amused and half vexed, and all idle and shiftless, stood by her bench looking on. Miss Wren's troublesome child was in the corner in deep disgrace, and exhibiting great wretchedness in the shivering stage of prostration from drink.

"Ugh, you disgraceful boy!" exclaimed Miss Wren, attracted by the sound of his chattering teeth, "I wish they'd all drop down your throat and play at dice in your stomach! Boh, wicked child! Bee-baa, black sheep!"

On her accompanying each of these reproaches with a threatening stamp of the foot, the wretched creature protested with a whine.

"Pay five shillings for you indeed!" Miss Wren proceeded; "how many hours do you suppose it costs me to earn five shillings, you infamous boy?—Don't cry like that, or I'll throw a doll at you. Pay five shillings fine for you indeed. Fine in more ways than one, I think! I'd give the dustman five shillings, to carry you off in the dust cart."

"No, no," pleaded the absurd creature. "Please!"

"He's enough to break his mother's heart, is this boy," said Miss Wren, half appealing to Eugene. "I wish I had never brought him up. He'd be sharper than a serpent's tooth, if he wasn't as dull as ditch water. Look at him. There's a pretty object for a parent's eyes!"

Assuredly, in his worse than swinish state (for swine at least fatten on their guzzling, and make themselves good to eat), he was a pretty object for any eyes.

"A muddling and a swipey old child," said Miss Wren, rating him with great severity, "fit for nothing but to be preserved in the liquor that destroys him, and put in a great glass bottle as a sight for other swipey children of his own pattern,—if he has no consideration for his liver, has he none for his mother?"

"Yes. Deration, oh don't!" cried the subject of these angry remarks.

"Oh don't and oh don't," pursued Miss Wren. "It's oh do and oh do. And why do you?"

"Won't do so any more. Won't indeed. Pray!"

"There!" said Miss Wren, covering her eyes with her hand. "I can't bear to look at you. Go up stairs and get me my bonnet and shawl. Make yourself useful in some way, bad boy, and let me have your room instead of your company, for one half minute."

Obeying her, he shambled out, and Eugene Wrayburn saw the tears exude from between the little creature's fingers as she kept her hand before her eyes. He was sorry, but his sympathy did not move his carelessness to do anything but feel sorry.

"I'm going to the Italian Opera to try on," said Miss Wren, taking away her hand after a little while, and laughing satirically to hide that she had been crying; "I must see your back before I go, Mr.

Wrayburn. Let me first tell you, once for all, that it's of no use your paying visits to me. You wouldn't get what you want, of me, no, not if you brought pincers with you to tear it out."

"Are you so obstinate on the subject of a doll's dress for my god-child?"

"Ah!" returned Miss Wren with a hitch of her chin, "I am so obstinate. And of course it's on the subject of a doll's dress—or *ad*dress—whichever you like. Get along and give it up!"

Her degraded charge had come back, and was standing behind her with the bonnet and shawl.

"Give 'em to me and get back into your corner, you naughty old thing!" said Miss Wren, as she turned and espied him. "No, no, I won't have your help. Go into your corner, this minute!"

The miserable man, feebly rubbing the back of his faltering hands downward from the wrists, shuffled on to his post of disgrace; but not without a curious glance at Eugene in passing him, accompanied with what seemed as if it might have been an action of his elbow, if any action of any limb or joint he had, would have answered truly to his will. Taking no more particular notice of him than instinctively falling away from the disagreeable contact, Eugene, with a lazy compliment or so to Miss Wren, begged leave to light his cigar, and departed.

"Now you prodigal old son," said Jenny, shaking her head and her emphatic little forefinger at her burden, "you sit there till I come back. You dare to move out of your corner for a single instant while I'm gone, and I'll know the reason why."

With this admonition, she blew her work candles out, leaving him to the light of the fire, and, taking her big door-key in her pocket and her crutch-stick in her hand, marched off.

Eugene lounged slowly towards the Temple, smoking his cigar, but saw no more of the dolls' dressmaker, through the accident of their taking opposite sides of the street. He lounged along moodily, and stopped at Charing Cross to look about him, with as little interest in the crowd as any man might take, and was lounging on again, when a most unexpected object caught his eyes. No less an object than Jenny Wren's bad boy trying to make up his mind to cross the road.

A more ridiculous and feeble spectacle than this tottering wretch making unsteady sallies into the roadway, and as often staggering back again, oppressed by terrors of vehicles that were a long way off or were nowhere, the streets could not have shown. Over and over again, when the course was perfectly clear, he set out, got half way, described a loop, turned, and went back again, when he might have crossed and re-crossed half a dozen times. Then, he would stand shivering on the edge of the pavement, looking up the street and looking down, while scores of people jostled him, and crossed, and went on. Stimulated in course of time by the sight of so many successes, he would make another sally, make another loop, would all but have his foot on the opposite pavement, would see or imagine something coming, and would stagger back again. There, he would stand making spasmodic preparations as if for a great leap, and at last would decide on a start at precisely the wrong moment, and would be roared

at by drivers, and would shrink back once more, and stand in the old spot shivering, with the whole of the proceedings to go through again.

"It strikes me," remarked Eugene coolly, after watching him for some minutes, "that my friend is likely to be rather behind time if he has any appointment on hand." With which remark he strolled on, and took no further thought of him.

Lightwood was at home when he got to the Chambers, and had dined alone there. Eugene drew a chair to the fire by which he was having his wine and reading the evening paper, and brought a glass, and filled it for good fellowship's sake.

"My dear Mortimer, you are the express picture of contented industry, reposing (on credit) after the virtuous labours of the day."

"My dear Eugene, you are the express picture of discontented idleness not reposing at all. Where have you been?"

"I have been," replied Wrayburn, "—about town. I have turned up at the present juncture, with the intention of consulting my highly intelligent and respected solicitor on the position of my affairs."

"Your highly intelligent and respected solicitor is of opinion that your affairs are in a bad way, Eugene."

"Though whether," said Eugene thoughtfully, "that can be intelligently said, now, of the affairs of a client who has nothing to lose and who cannot possibly be made to pay, may be open to question."

"You have fallen into the hands of the Jews, Eugene."

"My dear boy," returned the debtor, very composedly taking up his glass, "having previously fallen into the hands of some of the Christians, I can bear it with philosophy."

"I have had an interview to-day, Eugene, with a Jew, who seems determined to press us hard. Quite a Shylock, and quite a Patriarch. A picturesque grey-headed and grey-bearded old Jew, in a shovel-hat and gaberdine."

"Not," said Eugene, pausing in setting down his glass, "surely not my worthy friend Mr. Aaron?"

"He calls himself Mr. Riah."

"By-the-by," said Eugene, "it comes into my mind that—no doubt with an instinctive desire to receive him into the bosom of our Church —*I* gave him the name of Aaron!"

"Eugene, Eugene," returned Lightwood, "you are more ridiculous than usual. Say what you mean."

"Merely, my dear fellow, that I have the honor and pleasure of a speaking acquaintance with such a Patriarch as you describe, and that I address him as Mr. Aaron, because it appears to me Hebraic, expressive, appropriate, and complimentary. Notwithstanding which strong reasons for its being his name, it may not be his name."

"I believe you are the absurdest man on the face of the earth," said Lightwood, laughing.

"Not at all, I assure you. Did he mention that he knew me?"

"He did not. He only said of you that he expected to be paid by you."

"Which looks," remarked Eugene with much gravity, "like *not*

knowing me. I hope it may not be my worthy friend Mr. Aaron, for, to tell you the truth, Mortimer, I doubt he may have a prepossession against me. I strongly suspect him of having had a hand in spiriting away Lizzie."

"Everything," returned Lightwood impatiently, "seems, by a fatality, to bring us round to Lizzie. 'About town' meant about Lizzie, just now, Eugene."

"My solicitor, do you know," observed Eugene, turning round to the furniture, "is a man of infinite discernment!"

"Did it not, Eugene?"

"Yes it did, Mortimer."

"And yet, Eugene, you know you do not really care for her."

Eugene Wrayburn rose, and put his hands in his pockets, and stood with a foot on the fender, indolently rocking his body and looking at the fire. After a prolonged pause, he replied: "I don't know that. I must ask you not to say that, as if we took it for granted."

"But if you do care for her, so much the more should you leave her to herself."

Having again paused as before, Eugene said: "I don't know that, either. But tell me. Did you ever see me take so much trouble about anything, as about this disappearance of hers? I ask, for information."

"My dear Eugene, I wish I ever had!"

"Then you have not? Just so. You confirm my own impression. Does that look as if I cared for her? I ask, for information."

"I asked *you* for information, Eugene," said Mortimer reproachfully.

"Dear boy, I know it, but I can't give it. I thirst for information. What do I mean? If my taking so much trouble to recover her does not mean that I care for her, what does it mean? 'If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, where's the peck,' &c.?"

Though he said this gaily, he said it with a perplexed and inquisitive face, as if he actually did not know what to make of himself.

"Look on to the end—" Lightwood was beginning to remonstrate, when he caught at the words:

"Ah! See now! That's exactly what I am incapable of doing. How very acute you are, Mortimer, in finding my weak place! When we were at school together, I got up my lessons at the last moment, day by day and bit by bit; now we are out in life together, I get up my lessons in the same way. In the present task I have not got beyond this:—I am bent on finding Lizzie, and I mean to find her, and I will take any means of finding her that offer themselves. Fair means or foul means, are all alike to me. I ask you—for information—what does that mean? When I have found her I may ask you—also for information—what do I mean now? But it would be premature in this stage, and it's not the character of my mind."

Lightwood was shaking his head over the air with which his friend held forth thus—an air so whimsically open and argumentative as almost to deprive what he said of the appearance of evasion—when a shuffling was heard at the outer door, and then an undecided

knock, as though some hand were groping for the knocker. "The frolicsome youth of the neighbourhood," said Eugene, "whom I should be delighted to pitch from this elevation into the church-yard below, without any intermediate ceremonies, have probably turned the lamp out. I am on duty to-night, and will see to the door."

His friend had barely had time to recall the unprecedented gleam of determination with which he had spoken of finding this girl, and which had faded out of him with the breath of the spoken words, when Eugene came back, ushering in a most disgraceful shadow of a man, shaking from head to foot, and clothed in shabby grease and smear.

"This interesting gentleman," said Eugene, "is the son—the occasionally rather trying son, for he has his failings—of a lady of my acquaintance. My dear Mortimer—Mr. Dolls." Eugene had no idea what his name was, knowing the little dressmaker's to be assumed, but presented him with easy confidence under the first appellation that his associations suggested.

"I gather, my dear Mortimer," pursued Eugene, as Lightwood stared at the obscene visitor, "from the manner of Mr. Dolls—which is occasionally complicated—that he desires to make some communication to me. I have mentioned to Mr. Dolls that you and I are on terms of confidence, and have requested Mr. Dolls to develope his views here."

The wretched object being much embarrassed by holding what remained of his hat, Eugene airily tossed it to the door, and put him down in a chair.

"It will be necessary, I think," he observed, "to wind up Mr. Dolls, before anything to any mortal purpose can be got out of him. Brandy, Mr. Dolls, or —?"

"Threepenn'orth Rum," said Mr. Dolls.

A judiciously small quantity of the spirit was given him in a wine-glass, and he began to convey it to his mouth, with all kinds of falterings and gyrations on the road.

"The nerves of Mr. Dolls," remarked Eugene to Lightwood, "are considerably unstrung. And I deem it on the whole expedient to fumigate Mr. Dolls."

He took the shovel from the grate, sprinkled a few live ashes on it, and from a box on the chimney-piece took a few pastiles, which he set upon them; then, with great composure began placidly waving the shovel in front of Mr. Dolls, to cut him off from his company.

"Lord bless my soul, Eugene!" cried Lightwood, laughing again, "what a mad fellow you are! Why does this creature come to see you?"

"We shall hear," said Wrayburn, very observant of his face withal. "Now then. Speak out. Don't be afraid. State your business, Dolls."

"Mist Wrayburn!" said the visitor, thickly and huskily. "—*'Tis* Mist Wrayburn, ain't?" With a stupid stare.

"Of course it is. Look at me. What do you want?"

Mr. Dolls collapsed in his chair, and faintly said "Threepenn'orth Rum."

"Will you do me the favour, my dear Mortimer, to wind up Mr. Dolls again?" said Eugene. "I am occupied with the fumigation."

A similar quantity was poured into his glass, and he got it to his lips by similar circuitous ways. Having drunk it, Mr. Dolls, with an evident fear of running down again unless he made haste, proceeded to business.

"Mist Wrayburn. Tried to nudge you, but you wouldn't. You want that drection. You want t'know where she lives. *Do* you Mist Wrayburn?"

With a glance at his friend, Eugene replied to the question sternly, "I do."

"I am er man," said Mr. Dolls, trying to smite himself on the breast, but bringing his hand to bear upon the vicinity of his eye, "er do it. I am er man er do it."

"What are you the man to do?" demanded Eugene, still sternly.

"Er give up that drection."

"Have you got it?"

With a most laborious attempt at pride and dignity, Mr. Dolls rolled his head for some time, awakening the highest expectations, and then answered, as if it were the happiest point that could possibly be expected of him: "No."

"What do you mean then?"

Mr. Dolls, collapsing in the drowsiest manner after his late intellectual triumph, replied: "Threepenn'orth Rum."

"Wind him up again, my dear Mortimer," said Wrayburn; "wind him up again."

"Eugene, Eugene," urged Lightwood in a low voice, as he complied, "can you stoop to the use of such an instrument as this?"

"I said," was the reply, made with that former gleam of determination, "that I would find her out by any means, fair or foul. These are foul, and I'll take them—if I am not first tempted to break the head of Mr. Dolls with the fumigator. Can you get the direction? Do you mean that? Speak! If that's what you have come for, say how much you want."

"Ten shillings—Threepenn'orths Rum," said Mr. Dolls.

"You shall have it."

"Fifteen shillings—Threepenn'orths Rum," said Mr. Dolls, making an attempt to stiffen himself.

"You shall have it. Stop at that. How will you get the direction you talk of?"

"I am er man," said Mr. Dolls, with majesty, "er get it, sir."

"How will you get it, I ask you?"

"I am ill-used vidual," said Mr. Dolls. "Blown up morning t'night. Called names. She makes Mint money, sir, and never stands Threepenn'orth Rum."

"Get on," rejoined Eugene, tapping his palsied head with the fire-shovel, as it sank on his breast. "What comes next?"

Making a dignified attempt to gather himself together, but, as it were, dropping half a dozen pieces of himself while he tried in vain to pick up one, Mr. Dolls, swaying his head from side to side, regarded his questioner with what he supposed to be a haughty smile and a scornful glance.

"She looks upon me as mere child, sir. I am NOT mere child, sir.

Man. Man talent. Lerrers pass betwixt 'em. Postman lerrers. Easy for man talent er get drection, as get his own drection."

"Get it then," said Eugene; adding very heartily under his breath, "—You Brute! Get it, and bring it here to me, and earn the money for sixty threepenn'orths of rum, and drink them all, one a top of another, and drink yourself dead with all possible expedition." The latter clauses of these special instructions he addressed to the fire, as he gave it back the ashes he had taken from it, and replaced the shovel.

Mr. Dolls now struck out the highly unexpected discovery that he had been insulted by Lightwood, and stated his desire to "have it out with him" on the spot, and defied him to come on, upon the liberal terms of a sovereign to a halfpenny. Mr. Dolls then fell a crying, and then exhibited a tendency to fall asleep. This last manifestation as by far the most alarming, by reason of its threatening his prolonged stay on the premises, necessitated vigorous measures. Eugene picked up his worn-out hat with the tongs, clapped it on his head, and, taking him by the collar—all this at arm's length—conducted him down stairs and out of the precincts into Fleet Street. There, he turned his face westward, and left him.

When he got back, Lightwood was standing over the fire, brooding in a sufficiently low-spirited manner.

"I'll wash my hands of Mr. Dolls—physically—" said Eugene, "and be with you again directly, Mortimer."

"I would much prefer," retorted Mortimer, "your washing your hands of Mr. Dolls, morally, Eugene."

"So would I," said Eugene; "but you see, dear boy, I can't do without him."

In a minute or two he resumed his chair, as perfectly unconcerned as usual, and rallied his friend on having so narrowly escaped the prowess of their muscular visitor.

"I can't be amused on this theme," said Mortimer, restlessly. "You can make almost any theme amusing to me, Eugene, but not this."

"Well!" cried Eugene, "I am a little ashamed of it myself, and therefore let us change the subject."

"It is so deplorably underhanded," said Mortimer. "It is so unworthy of you, this setting on of such a shameful scout."

"We have changed the subject!" exclaimed Eugene, airily. "We have found a new one in that word, scout. Don't be like Patience on a mantelpiece frowning at Dolls, but sit down, and I'll tell you something that you really will find amusing. Take a cigar. Look at this of mine. I light it—draw one puff—breathe the smoke out—there it goes—it's Dolls!—it's gone—and being gone you are a man again."

"Your subject," said Mortimer, after lighting a cigar, and comforting himself with a whiff or two, "was scouts, Eugene."

"Exactly. Isn't it droll that I never go out after dark, but I find myself attended, always by one scout, and often by two?"

Lightwood took his cigar from his lips in surprise, and looked at his friend, as if with a latent suspicion that there must be a jest or hidden meaning in his words.

"On my honour, no," said Wrayburn, answering the look and

smiling carelessly; "I don't wonder at your supposing so, but on my honour, no. I say what I mean. I never go out after dark, but I find myself in the ludicrous situation of being followed and observed at a distance, always by one scout, and often by two."

"Are you sure, Eugene?"

"Sure? My dear boy, they are always the same."

"But there's no process out against you. The Jews only threaten. They have done nothing. Besides, they know where to find you, and I represent you. Why take the trouble?"

"Observe the legal mind!" remarked Eugene, turning round to the furniture again, with an air of indolent rapture. "Observe the dyer's hand, assimilating itself to what it works in,—or would work in, if anybody would give it anything to do. Respected solicitor, it's not that. The schoolmaster's abroad."

"The schoolmaster?"

"Ay! Sometimes the schoolmaster and the pupil are both abroad. Why, how soon you rust in my absence! You don't understand yet? Those fellows who were here one night. They are the scouts I speak of, as doing me the honor to attend me after dark."

"How long has this been going on?" asked Lightwood, opposing a serious face to the laugh of his friend.

"I apprehend it has been going on, ever since a certain person went off. Probably, it had been going on some little time before I noticed it: which would bring it to about that time."

"Do you think they suppose you to have inveigled her away?"

"My dear Mortimer, you know the absorbing nature of my professional occupations; I really have not had leisure to think about it."

"Have you asked them what they want? Have you objected?"

"Why should I ask them what they want, dear fellow, when I am indifferent what they want? Why should I express objection, when I don't object?"

"You are in your most reckless mood. But you called the situation just now, a ludicrous one; and most men object to that, even those who are utterly indifferent to everything else."

"You charm me, Mortimer, with your reading of my weaknesses. (By-the-by, that very word, Reading, in its critical use, always charms me. An actress's Reading of a chambermaid, a dancer's Reading of a hornpipe, a singer's Reading of a song, a marine-painter's Reading of the sea, the kettle-drum's Reading of an instrumental passage, are phrases ever youthful and delightful.) I was mentioning your perception of my weaknesses. I own to the weakness of objecting to occupy a ludicrous position, and therefore I transfer the position to the scouts."

"I wish, Eugene, you would speak a little more soberly and plainly, if it were only out of consideration for my feeling less at ease than you do."

"Then soberly and plainly, Mortimer, I goad the schoolmaster to madness. I make the schoolmaster so ridiculous, and so aware of being made ridiculous, that I see him chafe and fret at every pore when we cross one another. The amiable occupation has been the

solace of my life, since I was baulked in the manner unnecessary to recall. I have derived inexpressible comfort from it. I do it thus: I stroll out after dark, stroll a little way, look in at a window and furtively look out for the schoolmaster. Sooner or later, I perceive the schoolmaster on the watch; sometimes accompanied by his hopeful pupil; oftener, pupil-less. Having made sure of his watching me, I tempt him on, all over London. One night I go east, another night north, in a few nights I go all round the compass. Sometimes, I walk; sometimes, I proceed in cabs, draining the pocket of the schoolmaster who then follows in cabs. I study and get up abstruse No Thoroughfares in the course of the day. With Venetian mystery I seek those No Thoroughfares at night, glide into them by means of dark courts, tempt the schoolmaster to follow, turn suddenly, and catch him before he can retreat. Then we face one another, and I pass him as unaware of his existence, and he undergoes grinding torments. Similarly, I walk at a great pace down a short street, rapidly turn the corner, and, getting out of his view, as rapidly turn back. I catch him coming on post, again pass him as unaware of his existence, and again he undergoes grinding torments. Night after night his disappointment is acute, but hope springs eternal in the scholastic breast, and he follows me again to-morrow. Thus I enjoy the pleasures of the chase, and derive great benefit from the healthful exercise. When I do not enjoy the pleasures of the chase, for anything I know he watches at the Temple Gate all night."

"This is an extraordinary story," observed Lightwood, who had heard it out with serious attention. "I don't like it."

"You are a little hipped, dear fellow," said Eugene; "you have been too sedentary. Come and enjoy the pleasures of the chase."

"Do you mean that you believe he is watching now?"

"I have not the slightest doubt he is."

"Have you seen him to-night?"

"I forgot to look for him when I was last out," returned Eugene with the calmest indifference; "but I dare say he was there. Come! Be a British sportsman and enjoy the pleasures of the chase. It will do you good."

Lightwood hesitated; but, yielding to his curiosity, rose.

"Bravo!" cried Eugene, rising too. "Or, if Yoicks would be in better keeping, consider that I said Yoicks. Look to your feet, Mortimer, for we shall try your boots. When you are ready, I am—need I say with a Hey Ho Chivey, and likewise with a Hark Forward, Hark Forward, Tantivy?"

"Will nothing make you serious?" said Mortimer, laughing through his gravity.

"I am always serious, but just now I am a little excited by the glorious fact that a southerly wind and a cloudy sky proclaim a hunting evening. Ready? So. We turn out the lamp and shut the door, and take the field."

As the two friends passed out of the Temple into the public street, Eugene demanded with a show of courteous patronage in which direction Mortimer would like the run to be? "There is a rather difficult country about Bethnal Green," said Eugene, "and we have

not taken in that direction lately. What is your opinion of Bethnal Green?" Mortimer assented to Bethnal Green, and they turned eastward. "Now, when we come to St. Paul's churchyard," pursued Eugene, "we'll loiter artfully, and I'll show you the schoolmaster." But, they both saw him, before they got there; alone, and stealing after them in the shadow of the houses, on the opposite side of the way.

"Get your wind," said Eugene, "for I am off directly. Does it occur to you that the boys of Merry England will begin to deteriorate in an educational light, if this lasts long? The schoolmaster can't attend to me and the boys too. Got your wind? I am off!"

At what a rate he went, to breathe the schoolmaster; and how he then lounged and loitered, to put his patience to another kind of wear; what preposterous ways he took, with no other object on earth than to disappoint and punish him; and how he wore him out by every piece of ingenuity that his eccentric humour could devise; all this Lightwood noted, with a feeling of astonishment that so careless a man could be so wary, and that so idle a man could take so much trouble. At last, far on in the third hour of the pleasures of the chase, when he had brought the poor dogging wretch round again into the City, he twisted Mortimer up a few dark entries, twisted him into a little square court, twisted him sharp round again, and they almost ran against Bradley Headstone.

"And you see, as I was saying, Mortimer," remarked Eugene aloud with the utmost coolness, as though there were no one within hearing but themselves: "and you see, as I was saying—undergoing grinding torments."

It was not too strong a phrase for the occasion. Looking like the hunted and not the hunter, baffled, worn, with the exhaustion of deferred hope and consuming hate and anger in his face, white-lipped, wild-eyed, draggle-haired, seamed with jealousy and anger, and torturing himself with the conviction that he showed it all and they exulted in it, he went by them in the dark, like a haggard head suspended in the air: so completely did the force of his expression cancel his figure.

Mortimer Lightwood was not an extraordinarily impressible man, but this face impressed him. He spoke of it more than once on the remainder of the way home, and more than once when they got home.

They had been abed in their respective rooms two or three hours, when Eugene was partly awakened by hearing a footstep going about, and was fully awakened by seeing Lightwood standing at his bedside.

"Nothing wrong, Mortimer?"

"No."

"What fancy takes you, then, for walking about in the night?"

"I am horribly wakeful."

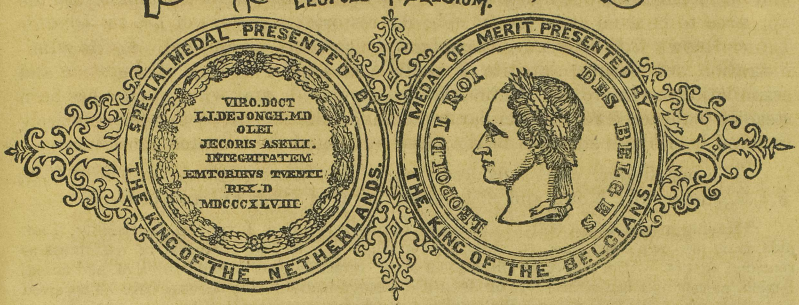
"How comes that about, I wonder!"

"Eugene, I cannot lose sight of that fellow's face."

"Odd!" said Eugene with a light laugh, "*I* can." And turned over, and fell asleep again.

DR. DE JONGH'S

(KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM.)



LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL.

THE invariable purity, palatableness, speedy efficacy, and consequent economy of this unrivalled preparation, have obtained for it the general approval and unqualified confidence of the Medical Profession, and, notwithstanding the active and in too many instances unscrupulous opposition of interested dealers, an unprecedented amount of public patronage.

The immeasurable therapeutic superiority of DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL over every other variety is incontestably established by the recorded opinions of the most distinguished Physicians and Surgeons in all parts of the world.

In numberless instances, where other kinds of Cod Liver Oil had been long and copiously administered with little or no benefit, DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT BROWN COD LIVER OIL has produced almost immediate relief, arrested disease, and restored health.

CONSUMPTION & DISEASES OF THE CHEST.

The extraordinary virtues of DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL in Pulmonary Consumption may now be considered as fully established. Administered in time, and uninterruptedly, it has not only the power of subduing all disposition to Phthisis but of arresting the development of tubercles; or, when the disease has advanced to the developed form, it has accomplished, in countless instances, a perfect cure. No remedy so rapidly restores the exhausted strength, improves the nutritive functions, stops or diminishes emaciation, checks the perspiration, quiets the cough and expectoration, or produces a more marked and favourable influence on the local malady.

The following high testimony to the efficacy of DR. DE JONGH'S COD LIVER OIL in Consumption is afforded by ALLEN G. CHATTAWAY, Esq., M.R.C.S., L.S.A., the eminent Surgeon to the Leominster Infirmary :—

"Having for some years extensively used DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL, both in public and private practice, I have no hesitation in stating its effects are very far superior to those of any other Cod Liver Oil. Nearly four years since, two cases of confirmed Consumption were placed under my care. In both, the lungs were a mass of tubercular deposit, and every possible sound to be heard in phthisis was present. The sole remedy employed was DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL; and now (1860) the patients are strong and fat; the diseased (abnormal) sounds nearly inaudible; and in the one case (male), hunting, fishing, and shooting, are freely indulged in, the patient expressing himself quite capable of undergoing as much fatigue as any of his fellow sportsmen."

[TURN OVER

GENERAL DEBILITY AND EMACIATION.

In cases of prostration and emaciation, produced by long sickness, by exposure to the deleterious influences of tropical and unhealthy climates, to vicissitudes of temperature, or where excessive labour, fatigue, bad nourishment, and other hardships have depressed and reduced the vital forces, and where life appeared to be even at its lowest ebb, the restorative powers of Dr. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL have been remarkably manifested. By its administration, the natural appetite is revived, and the functions of digestion and assimilation are improved, reanimated, and regulated; and, when its use has been steadily persevered in, its peculiar tonic and nutritive properties have entirely restored health and strength to the most feeble and deteriorated constitutions.

The benefit derived is thus described by BENJAMIN CLARKE, Esq., M.R.C.S., F.L.S., author of "Notes and Suggestions on Cod Liver Oil and its Uses:"—

"Having myself taken both the Pale and Light-Brown Cod Liver Oils for debility, I am able, from my own experience, to remark upon their effects and comparative usefulness as remedial agents. After the Pale Oil, and all other remedies that I could think of had failed, I tried, merely as a last resort, Dr. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL. I received immediate relief; and its use was the means of my restoration to health."

From innumerable medical opinions of the highest character in commendation of Dr. DE JONGH'S *Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil, the following are selected:—*

Sir HENRY MARSH, Bart., M.D., T.C.D.,

Physician in Ordinary to the Queen in Ireland, Ex-President of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland, Physician to Steevens' Hospital, Consulting Physician to the City of Dublin, St. Vincent, and Rotunda Hospitals, &c., &c.

"I have frequently prescribed Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil. I consider it to be a very pure Oil, not likely to create disgust, and a therapeutic agent of great value."

Merrion Square, Dublin, Sept. 6, 1860.

EDWIN LANKESTER, Esq., M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., F.L.S.,

Late Lecturer on the Practice of Physic at St. George's Medical School, Superintendent of the Food Collection at the South Kensington Museum, Medical Officer of Health, St. James's, &c., &c.

"I consider that the purity and genuineness of this Oil are secured in its preparation by the personal attention of so good a Chemist and intelligent a Physician as Dr. DE JONGH, who has also written the best medical treatise on the Oil with which I am acquainted. Hence, I deem the Cod Liver Oil sold under his guarantee to be preferable to any other kind as regards genuineness and medicinal efficacy."

8, *Savile Row, W., Aug.* 1, 1859.

A. B. GRANVILLE, Esq., M.D., L.R.C.P. F.R.S.,

Author of "THE SPAS OF GERMANY," "THE SPAS OF ENGLAND," "ON SUDDEN DEATH," *&c., &c.*

"Dr. Granville considers this Oil to be preferable in many respects to Oils sold without the guarantee of such an authority as DE JONGH. Dr. Granville has found that this particular kind produces the desired effect in a shorter time than others, and that it does not cause the nausea and indigestion too often consequent on the administration of the Pale Oils. The Oil being, moreover, much more palatable, Dr. Granville's patients have themselves expressed a preference for Dr. DE JONGH'S Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil.

1, *Curzon Street, May Fair, Jan.* 7, 1856.

RICHARD MOORE LAWRANCE, Esq., M.D., L.R.C.P.,

Physician to H.R.H. the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Great Northern Hospital, Author of "ON GOUT AND RHEUMATISM," *&c., &c.*

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